

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SHARP-TAILED SPARROW FROM CALIFORNIA.

BY

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*Ammodramus caudacutus becki*, subsp. nov.

SUBSP. CHAR: Similar to *A. caudacutus nelsoni*, but bill very much more slender, back more heavily marked with black, buff of anterior and lateral under parts more creamy, and chest less distinctly streaked.

*Adult* (No. 120310, Milpitas, Santa Clara County, California, May 6, 1891; Rollo H. Beck): Pileum deep bistre-brown, darker, or mixed with blackish laterally, and divided longitudinally by a rather broad though indistinct dusky grayish median stripe; hind neck mixed tawny-brown and light grayish; interseapulars black, mixed with tawny olive-brown (the last predominating along the median line of the back), the feathers, especially those toward the scapulars, broadly edged with grayish white, tinged, especially on middle of back, with buffy; scapulars dull tawny-brown, each with a central or median elongated spot of blackish; greater wing-coverts with outer surface mainly tawny-brown, paler at tips, the subterminal portion with a dusky, ill-defined, mostly concealed, spot; tertials black centrally, margined (broadly on outer webs) with tawny-brown, fading to whitish on outer web of first and terminal portion of outer web of second feather. Lower back and rump light grayish tawny or isabella color, rather indistinctly streaked with dusky; upper tail-coverts similar but more buffy, with dusky streaks more distinct. Tail-feathers light grayish brown, edged with a more buffy hue (the two outermost with pale buffy grayish), and marked with a median streak of dusky. Sides of head, including a broad superciliary stripe, tawny-ochraceous, interrupted by a grayish olive auricular patch; sides of neck, immediately behind the latter with a small blackish blotch. Chin, throat, chest, sides, flanks, and under tail-coverts buff, deepest on chest, which, with sides and flanks, are streaked with brownish black, the streaks less distinct on chest; breast and belly plain white. Bill grayish horn color (bluish in life?), with upper mandible mainly blackish; legs and feet light horn color. Length (skin), 4.55; wing, 2.15; tail, 1.90; exposed culmen, 0.38; depth of bill at base, 0.20; tarsus, 0.78; middle toe, 0.58.

In the very slender bill, the large amount of black on the back, and

coloration of the sides of the head and lower parts, this new form resembles *A. leconteii* more closely than *A. caudacutus nelsoni*. The lower parts are, in fact, exactly the same, while as to the sides of the head the only difference is that *A. leconteii* has pale grayish instead of deep buff lores, and a more distinct blackish post-ocular streak. In other respects, however, it is very different from *A. leconteii*, the absence of a sharply defined median crown-stripe and the presence of conspicuous whitish streaks on the back being the most obvious characters.

The single specimen upon which this new form is based was shot by Mr. Beck (after whom I have the pleasure of naming it), "among the tules on the edge of a small salt-water slough leading into the southern extremity of San Francisco Bay in Santa Clara County."